

The Honorable Benita Y. Pearson

United States District Judge of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio

November 8, 2017

Your Honor:

Thank you for your kind willingness to hear from family and acquaintances of my son, Evan Stern. If you are a mother, then you already know what I do. While the physical umbilical cord may be severed at birth; the spiritual cord that connects a mother's heart with her child's soul is never broken. When your child is hurting, suffering, making bad decisions; your heart knows it instinctively. And while they may not be able to tell you what is wrong; you know there is trouble. So, 14 years ago, when my son's transgression came into the light; I finally had a name to attach to what my heart already knew. And it was the beginning of a long journey of healing and restoration.

Your Honor, I am a physician. I spend my days hearing the intimate details of my patient's lives. And almost none of them is not struggling with some demon or another. Alcohol, nicotine, legal and illegal drugs, gambling, infidelity, pornography – the list is endless. But the common denominator is that as much as it slowly destroys the individual, the ripple effect out to those around them can be equally devastating. And for Evan, his transgression was illegal. He was so relieved to have the truth in the open, he knew he needed help and that dark day so long ago was the beginning of a long journey that brings us to where we are right now. Once exposed, **he has never re-offended**. And I am very proud of the man my son has become as he has taken ownership of his demons and worked very hard to be a good man. He has been brutally honest about his past and has engaged earnestly in the treatment process required of the court system. Even after 'graduating' from the court imposed treatment process; he chose to continue in private life-long counseling to remain accountable to his therapist and family members as we work together to help Evan remain healthy.

Evan accepted his punishment, paid his debt to society and accepted the terms of his supervised release and worked closely with his parole officer in all aspects of his life; personally, and professionally. By the grace of God, and with the help of my brother; Evan has been able to find some very kind business people who were willing to look beyond his past and employ him and utilize his very excellent skill as a programmer. It isn't easy to tell an employer that you are a convicted felon and during your supervised release; your work device will need to be monitored by the court system. And yet; Evan has an excellent reputation in his professional community. And while the recent events of the last few months cost him his job; Evan will pick up and find new work and will prevail.

In the past 8 years, Evan has managed to become a homeowner. He rekindled a relationship with literally 'the girl next-door' from his grade-school days and she loves him and wants to be his wife. We have a June wedding planned next summer and Evan has been renovating his condominium that will make his soon to be wife happy. She loves him, forgives him, and believes in him. She has stood by him through this recent very difficult situation which is astounding to me and his father.

Your Honor, it is my desire for you to see my son for the man he is. He is a kind, gentle, and shy man. He was that way as a child. He is not perfect; he continues to deal with issues that he realizes require accountability and professional help. I am terribly proud of his honesty and desire to be a good man; a good citizen. His community service requirement put him in touch with several organizations that he continues to help and support. My hope is that you will allow Evan to complete the last two years of his supervised release under his new parole officer seamlessly and successfully. The last few months have been very difficult for all of us. He is so close to the finish line. His confinement last month had devastating consequences and yet; he has pushed forward doing his best to live a good life. This mom is very proud of her son. This mom wants her son to have the opportunity to be forgiven and to spend the rest of his life as a good citizen of this amazing country that his career army grandfather (my father) lost his life for. And I wish to express my deepest thanks that you will consider the words of this biased mother.

Sincerely,

Sharon Griffith Stern MD

